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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to fill some of the gaps in the literature (on reflective teaching), delving further into the meaning and functions of reflection. First, it considers the origins of the term and some aspects of its development. It then analyzes and critiques some of the current notions of reflection. Beginning the process of a more rigorous assessment of the rationale and assumptions of various approaches, the paper uses as its focus the pre-service education program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and critiques the usefulness of various conceptions in facilitating a better understanding and more enlightened and strategic action on the part of teachers and student teachers. Various contextual problems are then introduced, outlining the conflicting aims in the uses of 'reflection' in teaching, and theoretic issues are raised. The final section offers an alternative way of understanding the process of reflection, one which begins to address some of the problems of current interpretations. (JD)

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The Dimensions of Reflection: A Conceptual and Contextual Analysis

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Delving into Reflection

In the past few years, the term "reflective teaching" has become popularized in the literature about teacher education in both pre-service and in-service settings. There appear, however, to be many different usages, some of which may even be contradictory. Few users elaborate what they mean by the term in either theoretical or practical contexts. It is also unclear what ideological or theoretical commitments are being made. Thus it is difficult to build on others' work in the field or to provide a more systematic overview of the term-in-use. The popularization of "reflective teaching" seems linked to those moves to reconstitute the role of the teacher which have emerged from various sources such as the work on teacher thinking, the work on teachers' practical theories, and the proposals to alter the way in which pre-service teacher education occurs. For example, the Holmes Report places reflection at the heart of their agenda: "reflective practical experience" is to be part of the prescription for making education more "intellectually sound" (Holmes Group, 1986: 62). Currently the subject of much interest in the teacher education field, reflective teaching deserves to be further clarified.

This paper will attempt to fill some of the gaps in the literature, delving further into the meanings and functions of reflection. First, it will consider the origins of the term and some aspects of its development. It will then analyze and critique some of the current notions of reflection. Beginning the process of a more rigorous assessment of the rationale and assumptions of various approaches, the paper uses as its focus the pre-service education program at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, and critiques the usefulness of various conceptions in facilitating a better understanding and more enlightened and strategic action on the part of teachers and student teachers. Various contextual problems are then introduced, outlining the conflicting aims in the uses of "reflection" in teaching,

and theoretic issues are raised. The final section offers an alternative way of understanding the process of reflection, one which begins to address some of the problems of current interpretations.

Origins and Development of the Term

During the 1980's, the term "reflective teaching" has become popularized in educational circles. In the U.S.A., the staff of the teacher pre-service education course at the University of Wisconsin-Madison have contributed to this growing popularity in a series of papers (See Zeichner 1980, 1981-1982; Grant and Zeichner, 1984; Liston and Zeichner, 1987a and 1987b). While the term and its practice have become more sophisticated and elaborated over the years, its central direction does not appear to have changed. Pre-service teachers are encouraged to undertake "reflective teaching" as a way of making "the journey from the student's desk to the teacher's desk" (Grant, 1984: ix). For them, becoming reflective is a "choice" that is highly favored because

> "Teachers who are unreflective about their work uncritically accept...everyday reality in schools and concentrate on finding the most effective and efficient means to achieve ends and to solve problems that have been defined for them by others. These teachers lose sight of the fact that their everyday reality is only one of many possible alternatives. They tend to forget the purposes and ends toward which they are working" (Grant and Zeichner, 1984): 4).

"Reflective teachers", on the other hand, "actively reflect upon their teaching and upon the educational, social and political contexts in which their teaching is embedded" (Grant and Zeichner, 1984: 4).

In Britain and Australia, the term has been used more in conjunction with teacher in-service, as part of the "teachers as researchers" and action research movements in those countries (See Stenhouse, 1975, Elliot and Adelman, 1973, Kemmis et al., 1982, Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Australia's action research movement, while not characterized by consensus, clearly places itself in a critical social science tradition. Reflection in this context is part of the "organization of processes of

enlightenment...of the group" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 146). The epistemological basis is developed:

> Theories are not bodies of knowledge that can be generated out of a practical vacuum and teaching is not some kind of robot-like mechanical performance that is devoid of any theoretical reflection. Both are practical undertakings whose guiding theory consists of the reflective consciousness of their respective practitioners (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 113).

By siting its tradition within critical social science rather than teacher education practice, the Australian literature tends to be more overtly political than the American. Reflection is only one element of emancipatory action research rather than the major focus of attention. By working with teachers rather than student teachers, such work can also call on and resonate with a greater tradition of political awareness and action than is possible in connection with student teachers. Reflection is seen as part of a different way to approach empowerment of teachers through in-service activity.

"Reflective teaching", in its various guises, can be seen as a movement; a growing group of varied actors who use the slogan and what its practices imply as a means of altering the assumptions of teaching and of teacher training, of resisting narrow conceptions of the teaching role and, often, as a contribution to the reform of schooling and of educational research. The term "reflection" then is not merely a slogan in itself, but part of a larger "slogan system" (Komisar and McClellan, 1961), one which covers and cloaks various and conflicting aims. Most of the literature presents an explicitly oppositional stance to other forms of teacher education and in-service, particularly those forms which these writers characterize as "technical" or instrumental, where the teacher or student teacher would be treated as the object of research or the implementer of techniques which others devise. The former could be characterized as part of a larger movement aimed, broadly, at "democratizing" the process of schooling. On the other hand, the term is

also used by those whose aim seems to be the further development of those technical or instrumental means, in the interests of further "professionalization".

Most of the people writing about the practice of reflection, especially in education, invoke the work of philosophers such as Dewey, Habermas, and van Manen to provide a canopy for their work. They then proceed to develop "middle level" theory about reflective practice, within the framework provided. The implications for the philosophic frameworks of the "middle level" theory are rarely examined reflexively. In this next section of the paper, we turn to "unpack" some of the current usages of reflection and the possible theoretical challenges to them.

Current Understandings of Reflection

Dewey's definition of "reflective action" is often used as the basis for the arguments in favor of the use of "reflective teaching". "Reflective action" is the counterpart to Dewey's "routine action". As interpreted by Grant and Zeichner, it includes "behavior which involves active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or practice in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads" (1984: 4). Attitudes of "openmindedness", "responsibility", and "wholeheartedness" are seen as characteristic, and emancipation from routine and the enabling of planned, purposive action are the outcomes (Zeichner, 1981-1982: 6-8).

In contrast, "routine action" is "behavior which is guided by impulse, tradition, and authority" (Grant and Zeichner, 1984: 4), which leads "to further enslavement for it leaves the person at the mercy of appetite, sense and circumstance" (Dewey, 1933: 89, cited in Grant and Zeichner, 1984: 5). Grant and Zeichner seem further to interpret "routine action" to mean an acceptance of a particular, socially constructed reality and to imply effects of hegemony in what has been called "misrecognition" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977):

> In any social setting, and the school is not exception, there exists a taken-for-granted definition of everyday reality in which problems, goals, and the means for their solution become defined in particular ways. As long as everyday life continues without major interruption, this reality is perceived to be unproblematic. Furthermore, this dominant world view is only one of the many views of reality that would theoretically be possible, and it serves as a barrier to recognizing and experimenting with alternative viewpoints (Grant and Zeichner, 1984: 4).

Reflective teaching, then, is defined as much by its opposition to what is perceived as a bad "norm", as it is directly. Students, too, seem to sense the oppositional nature of reflection as it is presented by Grant and Zeichner. Yet discussion of the constraints on reflection reveals more than just a concern with the time and energy involved. To them, an almost structural limitation is present. Some students interpret the answer to the question "Can one be reflective?" to include a recognition that real power relationships can impinge on their "chosen" actions. This can be seen as, in part, a result of seeing an as yet unarticulated connection between reflection and action.

To Grant and Zeichner, though, "choosing between becoming a reflective teacher or an unreflective teacher is one of the most important decisions that you (prospective teachers) will have to make" (p.4). Assuming the power of teachers to make such a choice, they defend "reflectivity" thoroughly - answering objections, from both the standpoints of practicability and necessity (1984: 8-13. Also Zeichner, 1981-1982: 8-11).

The majority of students seem to agree, and to embrace the concept of reflectivity "wholeheartedly". One student remarked, "How can anyone <u>not</u> think about what they're doing?" While in one way this could be seen as a rather naive question, in another it needs to be taken seriously, for the choice may not be one of "routine" versus "reflective", or even some point on a continuum between them, but rather, "Reflective about what?" More clear distinctions need perhaps to be made

between possible foci for reflection and among various kinds of activities involved in reflection.

Partially as a result of this need, the work of Van Manen (1977) has been used to offer some guidance (e.g. Zeichner, 1981-1982). Based on his understanding of the relationship between particular "orientations" in social science (the "empirical-analytic", the "hermeneutic-phenomenological", and the "critical-dialectical") and their respective "cognitive interests", van Manen identifies three "distinct ways of knowing and distinct modes of being practical" (p. 205). These, in turn, define the parameters of three hierarchical "levels of reflectivity" (van Manen, 1977: 226). At his "lowest" level, the "principles of technological progress - economy, efficiency, and effectiveness" are seen to influence practical choices between instrumental means to achieve given ends. The "middle" level is concerned with the value commitments that are seen to underlie all educational choices. "Practical" here, refers to an interpretive process whereby "individual and cultural experiences, meanings, perceptions, assumptions, prejudgements, and presuppositions" are analyzed and clarified as a part of decision-making (p.226).

"Critical reflection" forms Van Manen's "highest" level. Here, the practical "assumes its classical politico-ethical meaning of social wisdom". Questions concerning the "worth of knowledge" and the "social conditions necessary for raising the question of worthiness in the first place" are pursued through "a constant critique of domination, of institutions, and of repressive forms of authority" (p.227). The aim of such "critical reflection" is not the efficiency and effectiveness of the technical level, nor the understanding of the interpretive level, but:

> a distortion-free model of a communication situation that specifies social roles and social structures of a living together in unforced communication; that is, there exists no repressive dominance, no asymmetry or inequality among the participants of the educational processes. Universal consensus, free from delusions or distortion, is the ideal of a deliberative rationality that

> pursues worthwhile educational ends in self-determination, community, and on the basis of justice, equality, and freedom (van Manen, 1977: 227).

Emergent Issues

It is difficult to refute or even disagree with such a worthwhile and comprehensive goal, especially given the broad, very general terms it employs, and, in fact, such a refutation is not the intention here. Yet there are problems in applying this early Habermasian, tripartite framework to the everyday thoughts and actions of classroom teachers. Van Manen's "ways of being practical", although sound in their logical correspondence to his "ways of knowing", seem to assign the major part of teachers' thoughts to the "lowest" level. The actual contents of their reflections remain undifferentiated and obscure. They are also, at least by implication, not as important. Van Manen asserts in his introductory paragraph, that his purpose was "to demonstrate that it is only through such critical reflection that the questions of greatest significance to the field can be adequately addressed" (p. 205).

The point here is not to refute the contention that issues of "greatest significance" can only be responded to through "critical reflection", but that the hierarchical levels define away most teacher thinking without offering a clear contrast toward which a teacher (or any other practitioner/worker) might aspire. There is an implicit elitism that not only names the "practical" of most teachers as lowly and less significant, but also offers no guidance as to how to raise their "level of reflectivity". Indeed, connections and interrelationships between levels of reflection are obscured, making the development of "better" reflection more difficult.

Taken together, these models of reflection form a sort of "deficit model" of teacher thinking. Van Manen describes:

> Teachers freely engage in much talk about their everyday curriculum practices. But whether this talk is heard in the staff room or around the curriculum committee table, it seldom displays the level of deliberative reflectivity that one might hope to hear. When teachers are involved in the process of daily planning, adapting materials, developing courses, arranging subject matter content, teaching, evaluating, and so forth, they do so largely uncritically and unreflectively (p. 206).

While there is a body of educational literature that would support van Manen's contention (e.g. Zeichner, 1981-82); Lieberman and Miller, 1984), it is doubtful whether it meets van Manen's standard's for critical research forms. More importantly, the experiences of many classroom teachers, including our own, tell us that this is simply incorrect.

Teachers do think and think carefully about what they do. Much of the literature on the teacher's workplace, may not be sensitive enough to capture the contradictions and complexities in teachers' thinking. For example, teachers often have the opportunity to participate in curriculum development. If they choose not to, or engage in purely means-oriented discussion, accepting state or textbook recommended goals, their understanding of their own working conditions must also be considered. Lack of, or extremely low pay for committee work, perception of eventual pushes for "accountability", family pressures, and an awareness of time commitments, previous history of administrative non-support, and low rewards for innovation discourage many forms of teacher thinking. It is important to note, too, that while these may not be manifest in the discourse of teachers' lounges, they nonetheless reflect a great deal of "critical" thought.

Four theoretical shortcomings have emerged, which must be addressed in order for a more adequate notion of reflection to be developed. First, there is a need for a broader understanding of the concrete, material world of those whose labor is in schools. The real conditions of teachers' work form not just the constraints, but also the substance of their reflections. Also the fact that means-oriented deliberations, too, take time and energy, must be recognized.

Second, there must be an acknowledgement that much of teacher reflection is, of necessity, manifestly concrete. An exploration of what reflection on the "technical" really looks like, especially whether it is ever only "means-end" oriented, and whether contradictions are apparent, is crucial here. Recent writings in feminist studies (e.g. Belenky, et al., 1986; de Lauretis, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Martin and Mohanti, 1986; Pratt, 1984) can provide a useful lens for understanding this aspect of what is, especially at the elementary level "women's work" (Apple, 1986).

The third issue has to do with values: many of the criteria a teacher uses in making moral and ethical choices may not be of a nature recognized within current "critical theory" frameworks. Justice and equality may, for instance, be less salient than caring or nurturing (Noddings, 1984), or may need redefinition.

Finally, there is another dimension to judgments of worth. "Technical" skills, those of creating experiences for children that are both meaningful and satisfying, are not merely valuable, they are <u>essential</u> to getting things done. Whatever system evolves for understanding teachers' reflections, it must not, explicitly or implicitly, denigrate those skills. Rather, it should build from these, allowing for a more "connected" critique, one that leads from practice, through critical reflection, but always back to practice in a continuing dialectic. One must know <u>how to</u>, not just what and why. This is a version of the "technical", but one that assumes a close relationship between all three kinds of decisions.

Steps Toward Refinement

A partial resolution of some of these issues can be found in the literature on supervision in an "inquiry-oriented" program. Zeichner and Liston (1985), in developing a category system for analyzing supervisory conferences found that van Manen's "levels", while corresponding to the goals of their teacher education program, "did not adequately capture the existential reality of the supervisory

discourse" (p. 161). They attributed this to van Manen's reliance on "categories which were formulated within the realm of the theoretic", while the discourse of supervisors and teachers was primarily concerned with "practical problems" - those relating to "past, present, and future pedagogical actions" (p. 161). This definition of "practical" as related directly to actions within the classroom, led Zeichner and Liston to formulate six "substantive categories, differentiating what supervisors and student teachers talked (and presumably thought) about" - the content of the discourse. The forms of discourse within the conferences were classified according to four "logical" categories: factual, prudential, justificatory, and critical, corresponding, in turn, to discussions of what did or will take place, suggestions or advice emanating from evaluations of worth (judged in terms of aims rather than principles), reasons and rationales for actions together with their contributing factors, and assessments of rationales or embedded values (Zeichner and Liston, 1985).

While useful in seeing the parameters of possible discussions about, and therefore the nature of reflection on teaching, this system does not, nor was it intended to, direct us toward specific recommendations for reflections. It does, however, do much to identify areas of concern to teachers and prospective teachers, and to sort out the complexities of those areas. It does not, as van Manen's "levels" do not, show relationships between areas of concern within the substantive categories and the form of the discourse itself. Are there, for instance, connections between particular substantive categories (e.g. curriculum and materials) that could lead toward certain logical categories (e.g. critical discourse)?

Other questions remain: What, exactly, constitutes "critical"? Is it "better", as van Manen clearly believes? How much of it would be desirable in a "reflective" teacher? Within the substantive category of "context" are factors related to each

other and to the remaining categories, which could provide for any form of "logical" discourse? For example, educational research could be discussed as it relates to an identified problem in lesson procedures. It could also lead to a discussion of the influence of research produced within a university, marketed by textbook or testing companies, acting in conflict to the teacher's own pedagogical vision. Which combinations or directions for thought should be encouraged as being "reflective"? More specifically, how can issues relating to gender, race and class enter the discourse of teacher thinking? How can study of the effects of politics, economics, and culture be approached?

Some Contextual Problems

That the term "reflective teaching" should have become popular ought to be cause for rejoicing in times when the teacher is becoming even more subject to heirarchical controls and "mechanized" forms of accountability and evaluation (Apple, 1983). There is, however, evidence to suggest that the term reflective teaching has now become sloganized, obscuring more than it reveals about its own values and stances, even among those groups which attempt to use it as a form of critique. Recent meetings of educational organizations have included increasing numbers of papers dealing with various aspects to "reflective teaching". At the 1987 annual meeting of the AERA, and the 1988 meeting of the ATE, a large number of papers were concerned with the topic, even if one only goes by the titles printed in the program. Yet this in no way implies that the practices and their theoretical and epistemological conceptions are congruent either in their aims or assumptions. Indeed, there may be wide-spread variation.

What is clear is that, in the course of its growth in popularity, the term has also been used by groups with a range of very different reasons for focusing on teacher education. For instance, the Holmes Report legitimizes, to an extent, the usage of the term. Yet this can be seen as a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it

may give freedom to those wishing to try to extend their practice in line within a particular reflective teaching model. On the other hand, the context in which the "blessing" is given is fundamentally opposed to the epistemological basis of the promulgators of at least the UW - Madison version of the model. Instead of promoting teacher self-reliance and critical deliberation in the choice and production of knowledge, the Holmes Report details more measures to control curriculum and evaluation of teachers, both pre- and in-service. To promote a policy of encouraging teacher reflection, while instituting measures of greater control over teachers and teacher education courses, serves to obscure the nature and growth of that external control under a slogan of "greater teacher control".

The term and associated practices may function actively to obscure the tendency towards "deskilling" in various forms, because of the existence of "reflective teaching" in the public rhetoric. Popularity of a term does not mean that others understand or use it in the same way as the originators intend (See, for example, Cruickshank, 1985, Cruickshank, et al., 1981, and response of Gore, 1987). The main paradigm for teacher education, dominant in at least the media and major reports on education, seems to be "teacher-as-technician". This proffers neither training in, nor even allows for the prospect of, any form of critical intellect operating in the student teacher's education course or in the schools or classrooms for which the prospective teachers are being "fitted". It is precisely this version of teacher education that the concept of reflective teaching at the UW has been developed to resist. Paradoxically, the term's popularity may work to undermine the U.W.'s usage. Cruickshank's entrepreneurial packaging of reflective teaching as a series of techniques is clearly an anathema to those who see reflection as an element in political transformation of the schools and the role of teachers.

However, avoidance of dominant or preferred usage of a term is not <u>per se</u> a bad thing, since variety in usage may lead to widespread innovation and

experimentation under a general rubric. It may also be a healthy sign of loose theoretical and political alliances. At the same time, it may also work toward the means to overcome the deskilling of teachers' work. At least by calling on the intellectual tradition, however much its basis may be in dispute, the "reflective teacher" approach leaves some hope that the student teachers who experience this form of teacher education may have some analytic and critical doubt about their role and the role of educational institutions in reproducing and controlling the students - and themselves.

It is important to recognize that the term "reflection" itself is not a static representation of a particular reality. In educational discourse, it has a history and carries that history with it, however much redefined in use and rhetoric by a program or literature. History and common understandings of the term help to define its use by students and staff, even if they are unaware of it. While the term may escape it forebears, the continuing use of "cognitive" psychology and an over-reliance on the individual as "reflector" suggest that in this case, such escape is more difficult to achieve. Common sense usage of "reflection" as something that occurs with the aid of a mirror tends also to work against the redefinition of the term to incorporate critical and action-oriented dimensions. If the function of reflection is to mirror reality, the action element is missing and reflection tends also to remain a privatized activity.

As a term, "reflection" labels both what is relevant and what is seen to be irrelevant to an analysis of teaching and knowledge generally. It includes as relevant, partly by its history, a notion of the thinking individual within the Western rational tradition. This has a, perhaps subsidiary, function of drawing on the legitimacy of the university as the bearer of this tradition - enabling universities to continue to exert power through labelling teacher activities.

Perhaps the term acts as a smoke-screen for the further restriction of the freedom allowed to teachers, and, in this instance, student teachers, to think rigorously and systematically about their own work. The use of academic labels may mystify or make foreign the forms of critical thinking which student teachers/teachers may themselves already use (i.e. re-label and reassign "ownership"). They may well not recognize their own developed or natural faculties in the form of the label "reflective". The common usage of the term may also appear foreign once appropriated by the university. This may work to deskill teachers from their existing habits and practices, or even to alienate them further from the intellectual and collegiate practices necessary for any alteration in the material or conscious environment which they experience as a group.

Some Theoretic Shortcomings

There is a clear underlying idealist message in many conceptions of reflection: if the teacher thinks in this reflective way, then different (better) action will result. The question of the activity as represented in the terminology needs to be considered. Reflection as a noun or even reflective as an adjective undercuts, to some extent, the emphasis on thinking as active and political, removing a sense of agency. The nominalization and adjectivization succeed in deflecting attention from who is doing the act - reflecting - at the time. As well, this usage focuses on reflecting as the end in itself rather than as a means to developing more ethical judgments and strategic action towards ethically important ends.

Liston and Zeichner (1987b) endeavor to fill this gap in the literature and theoretical development of reflective teaching when they discuss the importance of articulating and emphasizing moral deliberation in pre-service education. Their most recent work, however, still posits choice as the basis of proper (moral) reflection. Grant and Zeichner (1984) also emphasized the importance of choice: a student can

choose whether to be a reflective or non-reflective teacher (p.4). That is, an individual decision can be made whether to "adopt" reflection as a form of thinking. Notwithstanding some reservations about the way rationality is used here as the basis for action, this position cannot explain a crucial question: If it is merely a matter of free, or guided, rational individual choice, why then, is "reflective teaching" so difficult to achieve? The very existence of the term and the practices associated with its promotion requires there to be an assumption that reflective teaching does not already occur or does not occur naturally - as well as an assumption that it can be taught. It may well be correct to assume that student teachers in particular are relatively apolitical and interested in becoming a "successful" teacher in terms of the norms presented by the dominant tradition in schools (See Hursh, 1988). Yet the concept as developed posits a different relationship between theory and practice than the idealist one and thus may undercut its own message through its form.

In Dewey's early use of the term "reflective action", and in the students' earlier cited understanding, there is a clear and particular linkage between theory and practice. The link of action and reflection, while echoed in the term "reflective teaching", tends to be ignored in the theoretical exposition of the nature of reflection. Reflection in the modern literature, even that which may call on Dewey himself, tends to appear more as a cerebral rather than a practical or material activity.

A further area needing attention is the tendency for "reflection" to be seen or used as a skill to be learned and acquired individually. If reflection is only a skill, however "artistic" (See, for example, Schon, 1983, 1987), then the political edge and the autonomy which it is hoped teachers will achieve as a result of practicing it are aspirations too bold for achievement. If not a skill, then the way the term is explicated needs more radical alteration than has been done so far.

In this area, the work of Kemmis (1985) is especially useful. For him, "reflection is a political act, which either hastens or defers the realization of a more rational, just and fulfilling society" (p.140). He offers seven "points", which in many ways summarize our discussion thus far and extend it into the realm of recommendations for research:

1. Reflection is not a purely "internal", psychological process; it is action-oriented and historically embedded.
2. Reflection is not a purely individual process: like language, it is a social process.
3. Reflection serves human interests; it is a political process.
4. Reflection is shaped by ideology; in turn, it shapes ideology.
5. Reflection is a practice which expresses our power to reconstitute social life by the way we participate in communication, decision-making and social action.
6. Research methods which fail to take into account these aspects of reflection are, at best, limited and, at worst, mistaken; to improve reflection, the study of reflection must explore the double dialectic of thought and action, the individual and society.
7. A research program for the improvement of reflection must be conducted through self-reflection; it must engage specific individuals and groups in ideology-critique and participatory, collaborative and emancipatory action research.

A more serious theoretical problem is posed by the lack of attention to group processes of reflection and action. How group reflection can occur and what it may be, are areas the literature tends to either ignore or assume without explication. The role of reflection in critical, political change would seem of necessity to be group-oriented. To ignore this aspect of reflection undercuts any hope of long term alteration of the political situation in which teachers find themselves, within specific educational institutions and on the broader, society-wide scene. If reflection is explained as a matter of individual choice, occurring within the psyche of the individual, structural pressure for change, wider than the individual or group in the school or classroom, cannot be taken into account. Yet it is precisely this wider situation that the reflective teaching practice is intended to change. Being non-reflective is a widespread construction of consciousness and material conditions, rather than a matter of choice.

In attempting to construct an explanation of reflection that would account for both individual and group reflection, the work of Jurgen Habermas on a theory of communicative action would seem a useful starting point (Habermas, 1984, 1987). In this work, Habermas sees his project as reclaiming rationality from the clutches of instrumental reason, and as necessarily going beyond the project of individual consciousness, which he sees as part of the Hegelian tradition (Habermas, 1984, 1987). Benhabib, however, shows that Habermas himself still retains some elements of this same tradition in the way he conceives of the subject (Benhabib, 1986a and b) and asks him to go also beyond the "philosophy of the subject". Benhabib distinguishes between the "generalized other" and the "concrete other", arguing that the concrete other is a necessary aspect of moral relationships and judgments: "[m]oral situations, like moral emotions and attitudes, can only be individuate if they are evaluated in light of our knowledge of the history of the agents involved in them" (Benhabib, 1986a: 414). Yet, if these relationships are not to be relativist and discriminatory through an over-focus on the concrete other, it is necessary to see the "validity of a moral theory which allows us to recognize the dignity of the generalized other through an acknowledgment of the moral identity of the concrete other" (Benhabib, 1986a: 416). This position encourages a <u>relational</u> theory of the self which then allows for both contradictions within the self as well as disputes and disagreements between people - a position which fits recent developments in psychoanalysis and feminist theories, and pushes further much of moral philosophy and political theory. The contribution of Benhabib in relation to Habermas is that she makes it possible to understand the movement of moral discourse from the private domain to the public, interpersonal domain, bringing it into discussion and dispute, and therefore subject to group deliberation and action.

For the conception of reflection with which we are dealing, this point is essential, since it is on the different interpretations of the role of subject that many of the different usages of the term and its practice occur.

> From Descartes to Husserl, from Feuerbach to Adorno, the philosophical tradition has offered two models of the self: either the thinking, cogitate self, or the active one appropriating and transforming nature. Either a lonely self cogitates upon a object or an active self shapes the world. At least since Hegel's revival of Aristotle, attempts have been made in the modern tradition to understand inter-subjectivity and the relation between selves as well. But the focus has been on consciousness, not on language-in-use" (Benhabib, 1986a 242).

In her argument, Benhabib draws on Habermas' insight that the "philosophy of consciousness puts the cart before the horse: it attempts to ground socialization...on individuation, whereas individuation proceeds under conditions of sociation alone" (Benhabib, 1986b: 242-3). Habermas' model of communicative action, centered on the lifeworld, rescues the possibility of human plurality and is at once the means and the goal of an emancipatory project.

Reflection as a group project requires this commitment to communicative action, to collaborative work, and to emancipation as the goal and means. Versions of reflection which emphasize or rely upon singular definitions of action and reflection do not admit the possibility of significant alteration to the status quo. By encouraging plurality, Benhabib suggests that

> our embodied identity and the narrative history that constitutes our selfhood gives us each a perspective on the world, which can only be revealed in a community of interaction with others. Such community and commonality arise and develop between us not, as Marx thought, because we are thrust into objectively similar life-conditions. A common, shared perspective is one that we create insofar as in acting with others we discover our difference and identity, our distinctiveness from, and unity with, others. The emergence of such unity-in-difference comes through a process of self-transformation and collective action (Benhabib, 1986a: 348).

The role of socialization which is one of Habermas' three areas of concern (cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization; Habermas, 1984) is

particularly important when we are dealing with teacher education, which must be viewed as a part of the socialization and reproduction of teaching practices and schooling norms. Thus we also need to pay attention to the structural constraints in which such actors undertake their collective action and self-transformation. Part of the focus of becoming a "reflective actor", in Benhabib's terms, will include working with the dynamics of the tension between self and other, through the consideration of concrete options around which communicative action occurs. For Habermas, self-reflexivity "entails critical awareness of the contingent conditions which make one's own standpoint possible (context of genesis), and an awareness of whom and what the knowledge one produces serves in society (context of application)" (Benhabib, 1986b: 281). Thus, along with the break from the philosophy of consciousness, the meanings of "reflection" and "self-reflection" change. These no longer refer to the cognitive activities of a Cartesian ego or to the laboring activity of making a self, but to processes of communication between selves" (Benhabib, 1986b: 282).

The act of reflection is - or perhaps can be and ought to be - the opportunity for the intersection of self and self, of theory and practice, of theory and theory, of history and future. Ideally, this is what the term and its associated practices in teacher education are calling on. The danger is, however, that precisely because reflection is directly concerned with affecting individual as well as group judgment, it has the potential to be an even more insidious form of socialization than other methods available either to the university or to the schools and the public media. Reflection as an approved and sanctioned (and assessed!) approach within a university's teacher education program can become a reified object rather than a dynamic dialectic within the individual and the group, and between theory and practice, judgment and past/future activity. By appearing to offer "choice", of encouraging moral deliberation, the techniques associated with reflection may come

to represent the action of reflection. This may actually result in a more profound colonization of teachers' minds with reflective techniques substituting for sustained, critical activity.

Toward an Alternative Model: The Dimensions of Reflection

An alternative model for conceptualizing what can be called the "parameters of the problematic" in reflective thinking, will now be explained. First, the "dimensions" are laid out along with suggestions for "reflective inquiry" appropriate to them. Then, examples of how this model resolves some of the issues raised in the previous sections, will be discussed.

The "dimensions" of reflection ("planes" or "fields" are also useful concepts here) are not to be thought of as hierarchical "layers" or "levels", but rather as forming a multi-dimensional figure depicting the terrain of educational reality and, therefore, its discourse. One plane of the figure (most easily thought of as a cube, although obviously the named dimensions exceed three) is occupied by the actors/participants in the social world, their material reality, and their actions. It will be called the "sensory dimension" because it includes all of those things one can perceive: people, artifacts, skills, other actions, knowledge that can be written down or otherwise seen. Teachers, children, their parents and other family members, administrators, educational "experts", government officials, non-parental community members, etc. are all roles that various people play. The material culture at this level includes physical objects: desks, books, crayons, school buildings, police stations, tenements, farm fields, curriculum guides, labor contracts, filmstrips, bathrooms, staff rooms, etc. Included here, too, are skills, as they are observed in "classroom management", "human relations", "group dynamics", lesson planning, pedagogics, running a committee, etc. Observable practices, such as "ability" grouping, large group instruction, "individualized" education, etc. would

also be considered here. Reflective inquiry, then, includes such things as examination of artifacts, observation, interview, self-critique, and dialogue.

The second dimension is one of ideals. Here the work of Kemmis (1985) and Grundy (1982) has been particularly helpful. Grundy used the distinctions of Aristotelian ethics to outline three "modes of action research": technical, practical, and emancipatory. These do correspond, somewhat to the "levels" of van Manen (1977), but there is less of a hierarchy, and more emphasis on moral thinking within the second mode. Unlike the technical mode which focuses on "skillful action" - "knowing-how" (techne) and "scientific action" - "knowing-that" (episteme), the emphasis of the practical mode is on "moral action" - "knowing-why" (phronesis). Grundy describes further:

> Phronesis is the basis for the wine-taster's ability. Knowledge, judgment, and taste combine to produce a discernment that is more than a skill. I shall use the term "practical judgment" for phronesis but these shades of meaning should be borne in mind...
>
> Practical judgment being a disposition toward "good" action rather than "correct" action possesses an aspect of moral consciousness that techne lacks (p. 26).

This general notion of the "good" that should be seen to permeate this dimension of ideals. It can be understood as referring to concrete moral or ethical principles, such as caring, justice or equality, but also as an ideological dimension.

Kemmis (1985), in attempting to show the political nature of reflection, gives a useful definition of ideology:

> Regarded as an object, ideology is the cultural and cognitive "residue" of values, attitudes, and beliefs which sustain a society economically, socially, and politically by reproducing our ideas of how we fit into the life of society and, in particular, by reproducing the social relations of production in society. More dialectically, ideology is created and sustained through definite patterns and practices of communication (language), decision-making (power), and production (work) which create expectations and sustain meanings

> for people as they relate to one another in the whole matrix of social life (p. 147).

While not fully accepting of this definition of ideology as separate object, it does add much to our understanding of such an "ideals" dimension. It contributes "values, attitudes, and beliefs" to the definition of "the good" or "moral-ethical principles" which could allow the directing of prospective teachers' inquiries to move from the study of actual practices in the classroom, "behavioral modification" or "ability" grouping, for example, to the examination of the underlying assumptions that are connected to those practices. It also points us in the desired direction of seeing not only connections back to the "sensory dimension", but also to other dimensions. This might help to expose the "socially constructed" nature of reality and reveal relationships to the economic, cultural, and political structures of society as they interact along the dynamics of class, gender and race (Apple, 1982).

The first of these "other" dimensions, is best understood as historical-comparative. The nature of the level itself requires little explanation. Reflective inquiry here could be directed at understanding how particular educational practices - classroom management, for example, came to be developed, or toward an exploration of the role of one's personal autobiography in the forming of educational beliefs or practices. It could be comparative, in the international sense, through a study of practices or beliefs in other countries; or it could involve comparisons between classrooms in different schools serving children from different social classes; or between educational beliefs held by various teachers; or even the contradictory impulses within the self.

The final dimension, that of "determinants", forms the face of the model's "cube" opposite to the sensory dimension. It is based on Apple's (1982) analysis, and is intended to depict the structures of the cultural, political, and economics spheres, as they intersect with class, gender, and race dynamics. Reflective inquiry

involving this dimension could, for example, be the analysis of textbooks for racial, gender, or class bias. It could also be directed to the role of the state in curriculum development, or at the impact of the testing industry on classroom practices. It could focus our attention on the gendered composition of the teaching force as a function of time and economic conditions, or on the unintended impact of pedagogical practices on various cultural groups.

The model, then, can be represented as a cube, with two focusing "faces", the "sensory" and "determinants" dimensions, connected by the "ideals-ideology" and the "historical-comparative" dimensions (See Appendix). Reflectivity might be judged in terms of area or volume considered, with several, non-hierarchical points of entry. There is, however, no intended "more is better" measurement of such reflections, except in the sense that understanding and action in relation to all dimensions should be a goal for all concerned with education.

An analysis of how reflection actually occurred in a student teacher's work will help to clarify how this model resolves some of the previously raised issues. The student's project began with a general interest in classroom discussion, in part formed by a series of observations she made: the children had bored faces, most didn't talk, and their answers seemed to be short and factual. To her, her current teaching strategies did not seem to "work", according to some, as yet not fully articulated goal of greater "involvement" and more "complex" thoughts. She decided to gather more specific information, asking: What kinds of questions do I ask? Who do I call on?

Within the sensory plane, the "actors" took on new depth as the student teacher began to investigate her questions. There was differentiation among the groups, looking both at individuals and for patterns by race, gender, and class, as she asks: Who are they? There is an autobiographical search, as this exploration stirs memories of her own childhood experiences, i.e. she locates her own history in

herself as an actor among other actors. Both the "determinants" and the "historical/comparative" dimensions have been entered. The "actions", too, are differentiated - who she calls on and the kinds of questions asked were seen to be a function of the subject studied, the "materials" used in the activity and the nature of the students. New questions arose, for example, Does my use of abstract terms instead of concrete objects in math classes affect some children differently than others? Does my use of large group, rather than small group organization influence discussion? This led to questions of "ideals": Why do I want everyone involved? What am I assuming about the value of participation?

This student's reflections involved thoughts and actions and entered all of the "dimensions". They gave her the ability to see actors in more depth and the realm of actions as broader. Yet always these were situated in a larger context. Two other aspects were important here. First, the different dimensions were continually connected and reconnected to reflections in the "sensory plane". Each time there was an expansions not only of her avareness of the action, actors, and materials, but of the relationship between these and other "dimensions". Second, a part of this "reflection" occurred with others. Her supervisor, her cooperating teacher, the other students, and the children discussed what she was doing, offering insights that also came from all dimensions. Reflection was thus a dynamic, multi-dimensional, and social activity. It was not a linear process but a relational one.

Some Concluding and Initiating Thoughts

It would be odd indeed if those promoting the practice of reflection did not themselves reflect on their theories about reflection. Yet, too often, vriters and promulgators of reflective practice have taken for granted the crucial issue of what reflection is. There are different philosophies and political underpinnings of the versions of reflection which are being promoted. It is possible for people of very different political and ethical persuasions to support the same strategy,

"reflective teaching", as long as these underlying beliefs remain unexamined and/or unarticulated.

Some of the possible meanings which could be surfaced from the reflective teaching literature include:

-the administrative approach, where one is involved in checking off whether certain things have been achieved or completed, according to some accepted criteria, often imposed or predetermined;

-the cartesian approach, whereby the participant detaches her/himself (or the supervisor assumes a detached position) in order to take a more "objective" stance towards actions and thoughts;

-the Marxist view of eliminating false consciousness or the neo-Marxist position of reflection as ideology-critique.

What we have to ensure is that we avoid the trap of the detached, cartesian, unitary self, the existence of which is posited on a separation of self and action, of self and others, and on coherence within the self.

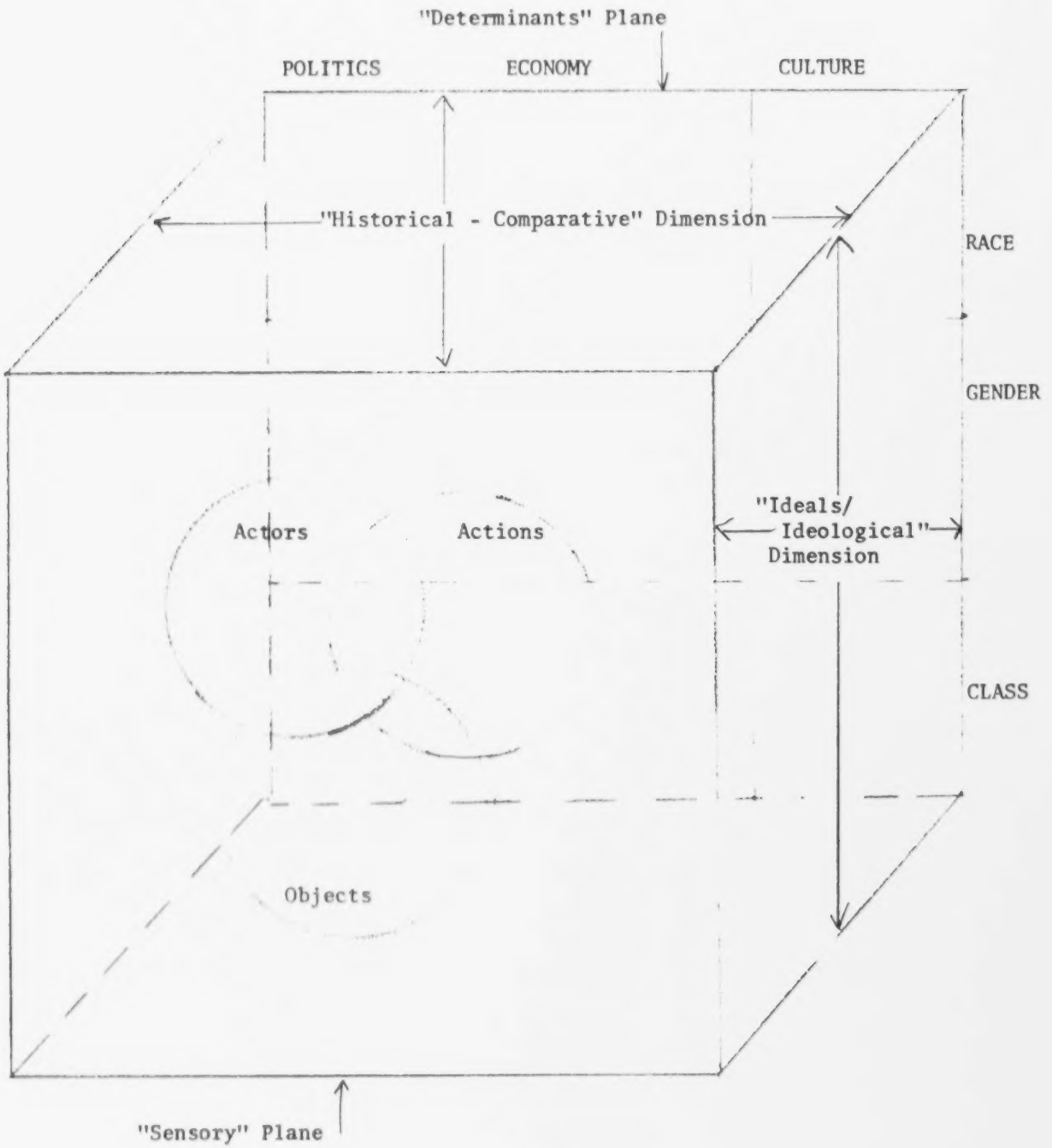
The challenge to the concept of the unitary subject has come from recent feminist work, literature of "minorities", and also the French psychoanalytic school following Lacan. However, as much of recent feminist work also shows, their alternative - the split, fragmentary subject - is not a good basis for undertaking political work or even making ethical judgments. Therefore, the challenge is to find the possibility of a version of coherence and identity that does not depend on either unitary or totally split subjects. Habermas' theoretical development of communicative action is an important step in this direction, because he integrally relates self and society. As Schweickart (1985) points out, the coherence of a conversation does not presuppose agreement but rather difference as the starting point; disagreement and contradiction are necessary elements of an ongoing conversation. It is these elements that we try to incorporate into our understanding of reflection. They also give us the basis for judging the particular position of different versions of reflective teaching.

Much further research is needed in three areas. First, we need a better understanding of who the "reflector" is. The "knowing, independent thinker" is not an adequate description of the "subject". Secondly, and relatedly, a methodology needs to be developed that is not based on individual psychology. Rather, we need to understand what happens when people reflect, going beyond the personal in include the institutional and ideological. Such a methodology would carry with it the potential to contribute to social, rather than psychological theory. Finally, if a new conceptualization of the reflecting subject were brought together with an explanation of the act of reflection which goes beyond the psychological, then it would be possible to describe how reflection is <u>both</u> an individual and a social process.

> [R]eflection is to be understood not as an abstracting away from a given content, but as an ability to communicate and to engage in dialogue. The linguistic access to inner nature is both a distancing and a coming closer. In that we can name what drives and motivates us, we are closer to freeing ourselves of its power over us; and in the very process of being able to say what we mean, we come one step closer to the harmony or friendship of the soul within itself (Benhabib, 1986b: 333-4).

Appendix

"The Dimensions of Reflection"



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